

An Account of the Proceedings at the Sessions for the City of *Westminster*, against *Thomas Whitfield*, Scrivener; *John Smallbones*, Woodmonger; and *William Laud*, Painter; for Tearing a Petition prepared to be Presented to the Kings Majestie, for the sitting of the Parliament. With an Account of the said Petition presented on the 13th. Instant, and His Majesties Gracious Answer.

See the Resolution of the House of Commons, in the 12th. Vol. of the History of the House of Commons, under the Title of the Petition of the Commons of Great Britain in Parliament assembled, for the Redress of their Grievances, and for the obtaining such things as they apprehend necessary or beneficial, to the safety and well-being of the Nation.

**I**T being the undoubted Right of the Subjects of *England*, and Warranted by the Law of the Land, and the general practice of all former times, in an humble manner to apply themselves to His Majesty, in the Absence of Parliaments, by *Petition*; for the Redress of their Grievances, and for the obtaining such things as they apprehend necessary or beneficial, to the safety and well-being of the Nation. And it being their Duty to which

\* I Do Swear from my Heart, That I will bear Faith and true Allegiance, to His Majesty, His Heirs, and Successors and Him, and Them will Defend to the uttermost of my power against all Conspiracies and Attempts whatsoever, which shall be made against His or Their persons, their Crown and Dignity. And will do my best endeavour to disclose and make known unto His Majesty, His Heirs and Successors, all Treasons and Trayterous Conspiracies, which I shall know or have of to be against him or any of them.

they are bound, by the expresse words of the Oath of Allegiance, \* to represent to Him any danger which they apprehend Threatning his Royal Person or His Government; divers persons in and about the City of *Westminster* considering the too apparent and unspeakable danger His Majesty and His Kingdoms are in, from the Hellish Plots and Villanous Conspiracies of the bloody *Papists* and their *Adherents*, and conceiving no sufficient (or at least so fit) remedy could be provided against it, but by the Parliament by whom alone several persons accused of these accursed designs can be brought

to Tryal, did prepare and sign a Petition, humbly representing to His Majesty, the eminent danger His Royal Person, the *Protestant Religion*, and the Government of this Nation were in; from that most damnable and Hellish Popish plot, branched forth into several the most Horrid Villanies: for which several of the principal Conspirators stand impeached by Parliament, and thereby humbly praying that the Parliament might Sit upon the 26th. of *January*, to try the Offenders, and to Redresse the important Grievances no other wayes to be Redressed, of which *Thomas Whitfield*, *John Smallbones*, and *William Laud*, inhabitants in *Westminster*, taking notice; upon the 20th. day of *December* last, they sent to Mr. *William Horsley* who had Signed and promoted the Petition, and in whose custody it was; to bring or send it to them, for that they desired to Sign it: and thereupon Mr. *Horsley* attended them, and producing the Petition in which many persons had joyned, he delivered it at their request to be by them Read and Signed, but Mr. *Whitfield* immediatly tore it in pieces, and threw it towards the fire, and *Smallbones* catching it up, said, that he would not take 10 s. for the names, and then they declared that they sent for it for that very purpose, and owned themselves all concerned in the design.

Upon Mr. *Horsley's* complaint hereof to a Justice of the Peace, a Warrant was granted against them, and they being taken thereupon, after examination of the matter were bound to appear and answer it at the next quarter Sessions of the Peace for the City of *Westminster*, and upon Fryday the 9th. of *January* instant the Sessions being holden, and there being present several Justices of the Peace that are eminent Lawyers, the matter was brought before them, and the Grand Jury Indicted the said *Whitfield*, *Smallbones*, and *Laud* as followeth, (viz.)



*The City, Burrough and Town of Westminster in the County of Middlesex.*

**T**H E Jurors for our Sovereign Lord the King upon their Oath do present, that whereas the Subjects and Liege People of the Kings and Queens of this Realm of England, by the Lawes and Customs of the Realm, have used and been accustomed to represent their Publique Grievances by Petition or by any other submissive way; And that the 20th. day of December in the One and Thirtieth Year of the Reign of our Sovereign Lord Charles the Second, by the Grace of God, of England, Scotland, France and Ireland King, Defender of the Faith, &c. at the Parish of St. Martins in the Fields, within the Libertie of the Dean and Chapter of the Collegiate Church of St. Peter, of the City Burrough and Town of Westminster in the County of Middlesex; a Petition written in paper, was prepared and subscribed with the hands of divers the said Kings Subjects and Liege People, (to the Jury unknown) and to our said Sovereign Lord King Charles the Second Directed, and to our said Sovereign Lord the King to be Presented and Delivered; by which Petition it was shown, that whereas there had been and was a most damnable Plot against the Royal Person of our said Sovereign Lord the King, the Protestant Religion, and well Established Government of this Realm, for which Plot several of the Principal Conspirators were impeached by Parliament, and whereby it was humbly prayed that the Parliament which was prorogued to the 26th. day of January next ensuing in the said Year, might then sit to Try the Offenders, and to redress the pressing Grievances not otherwise to be Redressed. And that Thomas Whitfield late of the said Parish of St. Martins in the Fields in the Liberty aforesaid and the Countie aforesaid, Yeoman, John Smallbones late of the said Parish, within the Liberty aforesaid in the Countie aforesaid, Woodmonger, and William Laud late of the Parish aforesaid in the Countie aforesaid, Yeoman; being persons ill-affected and Contriving, Devising and Intending as much as in them lay, to hinder the sitting of the said Parliament as was prayed by the said Petition, and also to hinder the Trial of the said Offenders, and Redressing the said Grievances, the said 20th. day of December in the said One and Thirtieth Year of the Reign of our said Sovereign Lord the King, as Rioters and Disturbers of the Peace of our said Sovereign Lord the King, for the Disturbing of the Peace of our said Sovereign Lord the King, with Force and Arms at the said Parish within the Libertie aforesaid in the Countie aforesaid, Unlawfully and Riotously did Assemble themselves and being so then and there Assembled, with Force and Arms then and there unlawfullie Riotouslie and Injuriously, the said Petition being delivered by one William Horsley to them the said Thomas Whitfield, John Smallbones and William Laud at their Request, and for the subscribing their Names thereunto if they should think fit, did Tear in pieces in contempt of our said Sovereign Lord the King, and of his Laws, to the evil Example of all others in the like Cases Offending, and against the Peace of our said Sovereign Lord the King his Crown and Dignity.

The Names of the Grand Jury that found the Bill, are these

William Jacob	John Weston	Edward Whitefoot	James Harrold
Thomas Trevor	Martin Frogg	John Gentle	Cornelius Rickfield
Erasmus Browne	John Pierce	Thomas Harris	George Wright, Apothecary
Henry Dagley	Robert Pinke	William Fortune.	Walter Wright
Richard Streete	Nathaniel Wilkinson	Roger Higdon	Adam Langley.
John Heuly			

Upon Wednesday the 7th. of this instant January many Gentlemen and Eminent Citizens, who had been concerned for managing the Petition for the Sitting of the Parliament, upon the 26th. instant met together and agreed upon the method of finishing the same, and of nominating Fit persons for the presenting it to His Majestie, which being accordinglie done; these Gentlemen following (*viz.*)

Sir Gilbert Gerrard Barronet, Son in Law to the late Bishop of Durham.

Francis Charlton Esq;	John Smith Esq;	Ellis Crispe Esq;	Henry Ashurst Esq;
John Ellis Esq;	Johnson of Stepney Esq;	Anthony Selby Esq;	Tho. Smith Esq;

Gentlemen of Good Worth and Estates, and severall of whom have been eminent Sufferers for His Majestie, did this 13th. of January, attend His Majestie with it at Whitehall, when being introduced to His Royal presence. Sir Gilbert Gerrard kneeling presented this Petition;

To the Kings Most Excellent Majestie, the Humble Petition of Your Majesties most dutiful and Loyal Subjects Inhabitants in and about the City of London, whose Names are hereunder subscribed,

Sheweth,

"That whereas there has been and still is a most Damnable and Hellish Popish Plot branched forth into the most Horrid Villanies against Your Majesties most Sacred Person, the Protestant Religion, and the well Established Government of this Your Realm, for which severall of the principal Conspirators stand now impeached by Parliament.

"Therefore in such a time when Your Majesties Royal person, as also the Protestant Religion and the Government of this Nation are thus in most eminent Danger.

We Your Majesties most Dutiful and Obedient Subjects, in the deepest sense of our Duty, and Allegiance to Your Majestie, Do most humbly and earnestly pray, That the Parliament which is prorogued until the 26th. day of January, may then sit, to Try the Offenders, and to redress all our most important Grievances, no otherwise to be redressed.

And Your Petitioners shall ever pray for Your Majesties long and prosperous Reign.

And expressed himself to this effect, Sir, I have a Petition from many thousands of your Majesties Dutiful and Loyal Subjects, in and about Your City of London, which I humbly present in their Names, and desire Your Majestie would be pleased to read it.

To which His Majestie gave this Gracious answer, I know the substance of it already, I am Head of the Government, and will take care of it, and then received the Petition, it being a great Roll of above 100 Yards in length, and carried it away in His Hand.